major oil companies for under-utilising the available capacity of production thereby lowering crude oil output, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether it is a fact that this leaves room for imports of crude oil and, as such the adverse balance of payments position is primarily due to the import of crude and other petroleum products by these two major oil companies, if so, what are the reasons for this shortcoming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) National Council for Civil Liberties, Ahmedabad has lodged a complaint with the Director General of Investigation and Registeration of MRTP Commission in January, 1993 alleging, interalic, under-utilisation of the available capacity of the production, by deliberately lowering down the crude oil production, by ONGC and OIL.

(c) The shortfall in crude oil production is mainly due to :—

(i) Slippages in projects;
(ii) Strike by the employees;
(iii) Reservoir constraints in WRBC
(iv) Floods/power shortages etc.;
(v) Frequent bandhs/barricades in the eastern region;
(vi) Rectificatory measures in Bombay High field.

The deficit is made good by imports to meet the essential needs of the economy.

Oil Exploration by ONGC at Ichapur well-1 in West Bengal

1777. DR. ASHOK MITRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that preliminary explorations by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission at the site of Ichapur Well-1 located in North 24-Parganas, West Bengal have indicated the possibility of extraction of high grade oil;

(b) if so, what are the details of the chemical and other properties of the oil struck at the location; and

(c) what follow-up measures have been taken by the ONGC and Government for the extraction of oil and gas for commercial purposes from Ichapur and its neighbourhood?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) The exploratory drilling work at the site of Ichapur-1 well has indicated non-commercial flow of 1 m^3/day, condensate with 1600 to 2000 m^3/day low pressure gas during testing from the interval 4346-4349 m.

(b) The hydrocarbon fluid from Ichapur-1 is CONDENSATE in nature having low density, low pour point, low asphaltene and low wax content. It is paraffinic napthenic in nature.

The stable carbon isotopic studies on gases indicate thermal origin. Gases are wet gases which contain higher hydrocarbons upto Pentane. It has high proportion of nitrogen and is devoid of other inert gases.

(c) The find is so far non-commercial, however, a step-out location Ichapur-2 is under drilling to delineate the extension of the pay sand. The area is also being covered by 3-D seismic survey.

Cooking Gas connections to Freedom Fighters

1778. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed cooking gas connection on out of turn basis to the families of freedom fighters; and

(b) if not, whether Government